

**AUBADE 1980**

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# **Aubade 1980**

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# Rhonda Graves



# Meredith Pierce

## Crow Bars

We are here for death  
an assembly of hookbacked  
redeyed Furies listening  
to the moan of the two  
old people clutched as one  
fleshy lump of backs and  
vulnerable hell attempting  
to support this weight  
before the crystal lamp  
while prisms tinkle  
a tolling of the sleepbell  
reflecting inhuman sound  
louder the amplification of sorrow  
stark in every tick of the mad timeface  
between the lamentations of the two.  
At another time  
we would have thought  
their noise a wooden crate  
from the shoppe antique  
being ripped and flashing  
rusty teeth to a cold iron  
crowbar.  
Ripping slowly our pain  
into pain upon pain  
in drapes of black linen  
that gasp for breaths  
that are gone  
in crates  
demoned by crow  
cries.  
We hover like seabirds at dusk  
water rejected from cheekbone  
oily featherlike,  
beaded and rolling with  
wet salt bitter  
and suffocating like hot  
pillows on hot nights  
only theirs  
are cold as seaweed or  
dryhairtangledwet  
no water in the overwatered  
drowned (to need no more)  
in prism light and refracted sound  
screeching the wood splits  
around the nails  
and all is silence  
for more than a time.

## The Feast of Chorpus Christi

The carnival Catholics  
took no notice  
of the Old Black Crow  
stooped vaguely  
on his tilted and rickety  
porch  
in his rocker  
with the faded pink and green  
cushion printed  
with lilies  
I believe.  
The promenade began  
the day that the  
purple shroud  
was removed;  
they had not waited,  
suffering  
with the faceless,  
they only came to stare  
at the wounds  
that dripped the shameful blood  
of their negligence.  
I believe  
I saw on that  
Easter Sunday  
the old black man  
rise from his lilies  
and mount the wind  
bleached stairs  
to his cobwebbed  
and empty attic.

## Tapestries (for K. H.)

Leaping horses  
scared  
like you  
like me.  
“Arabian Nights”  
with arrows  
sharp,  
red-crusted,  
jabbing,  
at me  
at you.  
Castles glisten  
listen  
to them  
bemoaning the dark  
you inhabit  
I escape.  
And the horses  
fall  
down  
crashing, crumbling,  
squealing human cries  
on bloody knees  
like you  
before  
being sedated  
after knowing  
that your prince  
wouldn’t  
come.  
I let it out  
in a poem  
you only gasp  
and dream  
and rage  
and think  
nothing  
nothing  
nothing can be  
like you  
like he  
like the tapestry.

The arrow  
pierces  
the heart  
of the warrior  
king.  
You laugh  
I cringe  
you panic  
and try  
to leap  
high  
from your tower  
window  
and slice  
the tightly clutched  
hoofs . . .  
pounding, pounding  
expelling  
speedy death  
with a neigh  
to life!  
I saw  
but said  
nothing  
you tried  
to say  
something  
and leap high  
to forget  
to remember.

# Meredith Pierce

## A Question of Time

i

Longer it seems  
these five hours of pause  
for your arrival  
than the five weeks  
that have led to  
this prehensile wait  
Damning the gold-handed  
face on my wrist  
for seducing me into imagining  
that I hear its pulse  
upon my own  
This crazed eye-glazed frenzy  
far worse than the high-strung  
cup of coffee; the magic bean water  
taken before a now two day old  
interview with the people who decide  
whether one is a poet or not—  
more often not, perhaps, than so  
Jumping beyond the porch  
window glass everytime  
a car chuckles  
down the street mocking  
restlessness that fears forgetting  
what you look like  
save in nightless sleeps  
that recall nothing at the moment  
that eye meets morning-light in a dim  
nothing-time of day  
when one is a mere blurb of  
mouths and arms stretching  
arms and mouths greeting  
meet in the stilldreampre-flyingupsteps greeting  
quick decide whether this a poem  
or . . .

ii

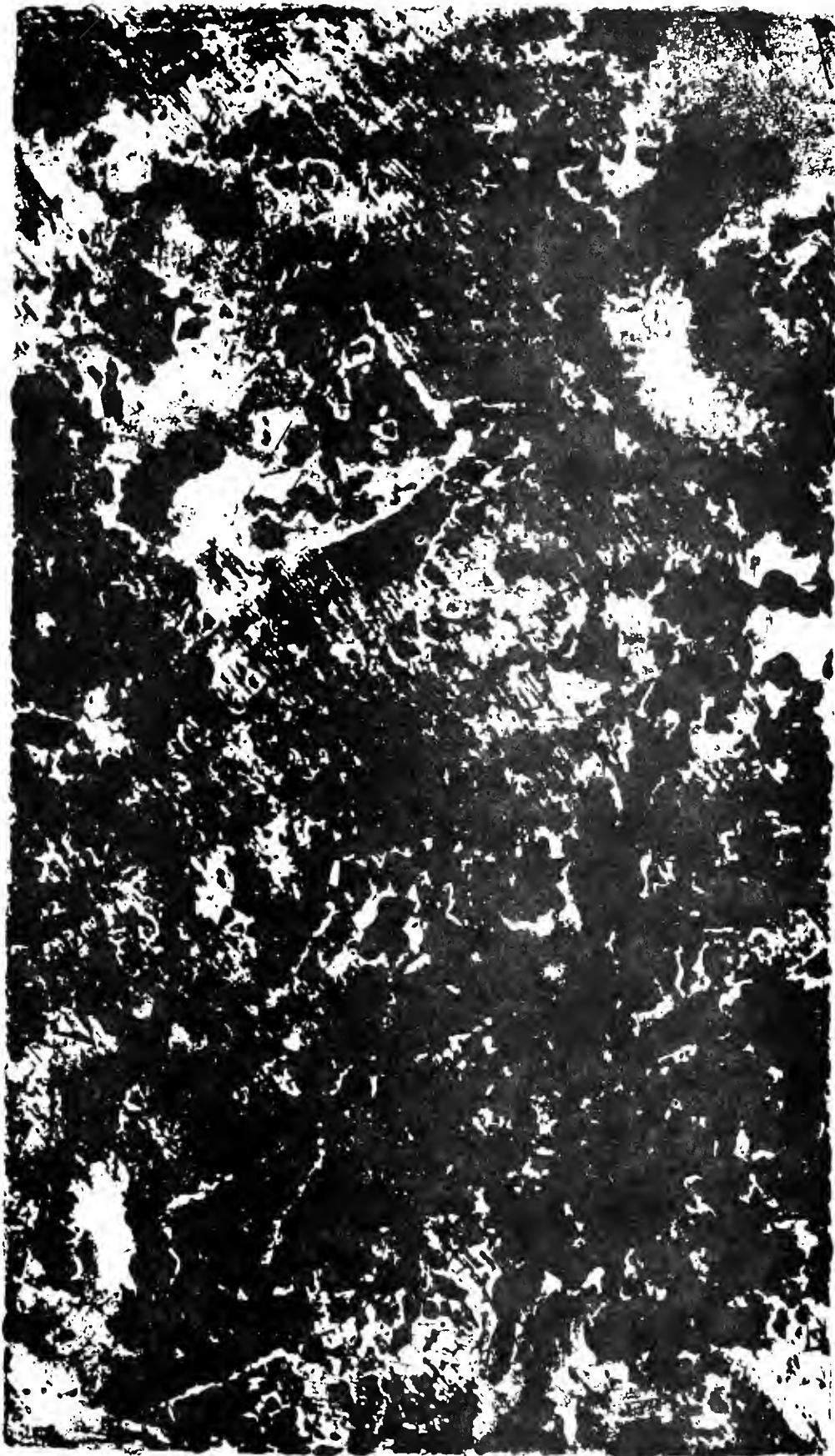
Judgement is often consumed by a sneering Venus.

## The Revenge of the Streetlight

A crash, the shout  
the shatter  
of white delivered  
to the hot  
slab below  
where it hides  
blue  
in dark cracks  
and claims  
a revenge  
drawing crimson  
from the bare  
toes  
of naughty boys  
and the sleek  
paws  
of grey toms.

The violated  
streetlamp shines  
on  
in defeat  
while little men hover  
on doorsteps  
wondering how  
they will explain  
the stains  
on their pants.

Cindy Hart







### Quiet Storm

Deep within a dark, ageless night.  
I rose to hear rain make natural graduations.

Slowly ebbing waves,  
of wind and water.  
The quiet storm,  
Gradually grows.

Its thunder rolls,  
as its lightening glows,  
through the cracks,  
in wood veneer,  
window shades.

The rain taps my window,  
as the cars on the highway  
splash through the storms life,  
making sounds customary,  
for a night such as this.

The storm is not  
the downpour type.  
Slowly emerging,  
Long lasting rain,  
Broad expanse of clouds.  
Covering an endless sky.

Thunder roll  
Slowly begins  
Far away.  
Gradually  
sounds closer  
storm grows.

Lightening strikes nearby,  
As I turn over,  
Once again,  
sleeping  
to the music  
of the life  
of the earth

Next morning  
I will write.

## **Susan Flournoy**

### **Requiem for Willie**

Brown, furrowed like the land  
Your face swims up to me

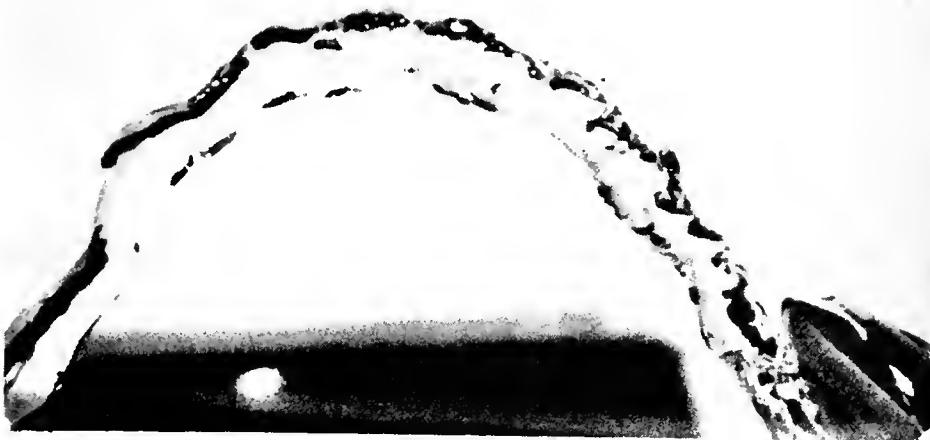
Eighty years of battling the earth . . .  
Your mouth shows no sorrow

The earth smiles  
You are released

I am relieved. Today the  
Fields will cradle your  
Broken soul.

## **Sally Scarpa**





**Carol Swain**

**Repertoire  
(for Carrie)**

If she said  
songs grow  
on trees

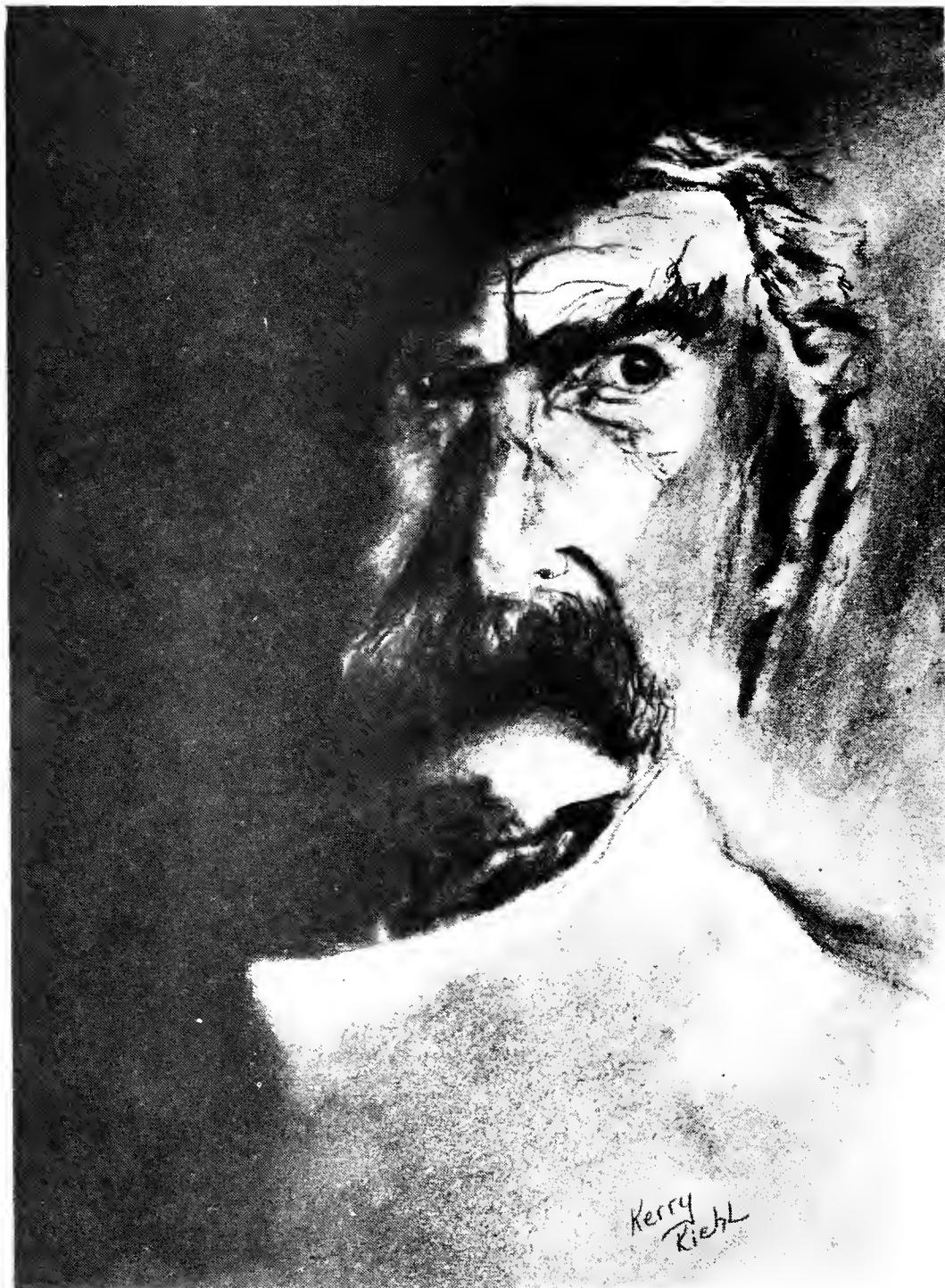
You might believe her

Cuddled in the guitar's curves  
she airs her repertoire  
The notes hover  
shimmer their way inside  
(purity not often visualized)  
Each one reflects her radiance

The passage  
of unseen shades  
is directed by the penetrating light  
of her fugitive expression

Even her soul seems  
less elusive than most  
As if you might touch it accidentally  
and find it warm

# Kerry Kiehl



## The Gargoyle

The sun rose clean and bright. The soft April breeze floated down into the valley. As the sun had risen for thousands of years on this wooded valley so it rose this morning. But this morning was different.

If you stood a stone's throw away from the road that ran through the dark dead center of this wood, you would stand on the ruined foundation of a once great altar. A massive place of worship had once stood there proud and hard, driving up to heaven vaulting arches, straining arms, but all that was left was the altar, hidden by the trees. On this altar grew a rosebush with but a single rose.

Time had done her work on the ruins, though, and man had made those ruins. Since the end of the last war there was very little left of the great spiritual stronghold other than the barest remnants of the foundation. Besides this there was only a motley assortment of what might possibly have once been fine and beautiful; a bell chain now rusted and broken, some lead from a stained glass window, some bits of rusty piping and perhaps a finger, an outstretched hand of an old stone figure in whose trust and care many hopes and dreams were given. A smiling face, benevolent. Dead. All dead.

There had been thirteen stone gargoyles. Six on either side and one at the head of the fortress. Perched like eagles in an eyrie, their haunches tensed, their eyes stared out emotionless, cold and hard, full of confused and embittered malice. Angry perhaps for having been given all the features of emotion on the outside and none of the roots of emotion on the inside. But that's absurd. Stone cannot feel.

Since it had been truly abandoned two years ago, there were many unanswered questions regarding this ancient place of worship. The jackals and vultures that always seem to creep into hallowed places whose Waterloo has been fought and lost and found the twelve "follower" gargoyles (So they had been nicknamed by the locals),

but the thirteenth, the "leader" had been nowhere to be found. Only his empty perch served as silent testimony to his existence at all.

Each of the twelve gargoyles had fallen from that peculiar position of grace bestowed upon those few lucky enough to be raised above the rabble, the crowd. But, as those who fall from positions reserved only for the strong fall hard and fast, sacrificing themselves for the same rabble they would have saved had providence allowed one more turn of the wheel, so fell the thirteenth. Except for one. Or so we are led to believe.

Each of the twelve had fallen directly below their places of servitude, and so heavy had they been that they sank deep into the earth below, almost as if hiding from some terrible judgment, their feet raised in a crude, harsh, almost obscene gesture of defiance to the sky. Except for the thirteenth. He was nowhere to be found. Perhaps he had been stolen. But who would steal an ugly stone figure?

Entwined by leafy branches, a grey hand moved. A blurred red rose slowly came into focus to eyes that had been blind for three long years. The thorns that previously had not pierced his skin, did so now with sharp clarity. He slowly, painfully flexed his long thin fingers, motionless cold surged to red life. Warmth searched out each joint and every limb pulsed with a vigor he had never before experienced. He had been born into imprisonment and had never known how to feel, how to flex, how to move. He revelled in it's flexibility, this new freedom. He felt all the time, with all of its dry, unshed tears, fall away like minutes. The slow procession of time quickened to a canter, and he was finally free.

Swallowed and covered by thorns, he moved again in the green and red. Knowing he must never harm the rose, lest he die, he gently pulled the leafy arms from around his limbs. He pulled thorns from his feet and his wrists. He breathed painfully

clean air, saw painfully clear colors, heard painfully beautiful sounds. It had been safe to know nothing of the gift of feeling. But now he felt a painful immortality.

His life had come from the earth. A rose had breathed life into him. He felt a kinship with the trees, with the earth. And now with eternity.

He wandered through the wood, marvelling at these new, but painful, sights. He enjoyed travelling where he pleased. He swore to never again be imprisoned, never to be caged. He vowed to take care of his life, his rose.

As the days became warmer, so did the gargoyle. As nights became softer, so did the gargoyle. He learned the habits of animals and birds. The idyllic life was all he knew. He bathed and thought and walked and even sang in his coarse and throaty voice. Singing was the only sound he ever made.

But one day he saw a girl, and froze. The sun shone brightly on her golden hair. The white dress she wore, though beautiful, was covered almost completely by a dirty red apron. He'd never seen this kind of beauty, this kind of grace. Whereas he stumbled, she walked on a cloud. He was ugly and she was—she was all that he knew of beauty. He didn't know what to do, so he watched her.

He soon found that she passed through the wood every morning on her way to town. He supposed she would return this way as well. Sometimes she returned rather late. But there was something different about her whenever she returned, but he could not figure out quite what that was. He was not sure he wanted to.

In the morning she was always very clean and bright. Her pretty hair pulled back in a neat bun; the white of her underdress showing itself in the morning sun. But the red dress, coarse and too big for her small frame, seemed to hide the white dress that

he loved so much. She always seemed very tired when she made her trips back through the woods. Her hair was mussed, her clothes were dishevelled, and the white dress was as soiled as the red apron. Her walk was wobbly, and sometimes she fell.

He watched her come and go for many days. He would wait for hours, not wanting to miss her in the mornings. He liked her best in the morning. When she drew nearer, his heart pounded loudly, almost speaking, telling him to tell her his name. If he could speak. If he had a name. If. If. He ached to see her smile, to see her smile at him. He thought to give her a gift.

He left earlier than usual the next morning. He hid in the usual spot on the side of the road. He climbed down into the ditch filled with dirt and mud. And he waited. And waited. And waited. As the sun came up, the rosebush that used to wrap his cold arms withered and fell.

An hour passed before he saw her coming. She was far down the road, walking slowly. His heart began to beat, louder and louder, pounding in his ears.

The road stretched on and on. She walked with her head bowed, looking at the ground, thinking private thoughts, deep within herself. Suddenly she came upon the queerest pair of feet she had ever seen in her life. Looking slowly up from the gnarled bare feet she saw skinny, wiry legs, a tiny hunchbacked frame in a sort of long leather jerkin out of which dangled and swung two gangly arms, the right one fixed awkwardly behind, out of sight. The queer little man smiled shyly up at her. His huge black eyes protruding from mottled hairless skin, his hooked nose, slightly pointed ears, tight little mouth pulled into a painful smile and bald head all combined to give this harmless little mock manchild an attitude of apology for even existing. The little man's toothless smile made the girl uneasy.

"Surely this is the ugliest little beast I

have ever seen," she thought, and she was afraid. Eager to see what he held behind his back, however, she tamed her fear and put on a mask that belied her repulsion of the little man.

"Little man," she said, smiling coyly, "what is that you have behind your back?" The little man said nothing, but stepped back.

If his face could have turned red, it surely would have. He just continued to smile his thin smile, afraid and ashamed of his toothlessness. So he kept his right arm behind him, clutching his fast wilting treasure, his gift to the barefoot princess who made him want to live. Clutching his life in his hand, he trembled but stood his ground. His heart was warmer, now, beating strongly. "Surely you can show me, I would love to see anything so handsome a little man, a strong little man, at that, might have behind his back." She reached out to pat his head. "Like a dog," she thought, "very much like a dog."

All of his new existence had been building up to this moment. All of his dreams, meager, few, precious and fine, valued above all else could now come true. His small world had been so lonely, and now he could share it, and make a home for himself, a real home at last.

The little man stepped toward the girl and her eyes widened with repulsion and apprehension.

"She surely must think I am fine," he thought, "see how her eyes light up when I am near."

He became braver. He was but inches away from his redemption. His desperate

life was over, he had a gift to prove his devotion. He tensed and tried to straighten his bent gnarled back. His hand clutched the rose. It seemed smaller now.

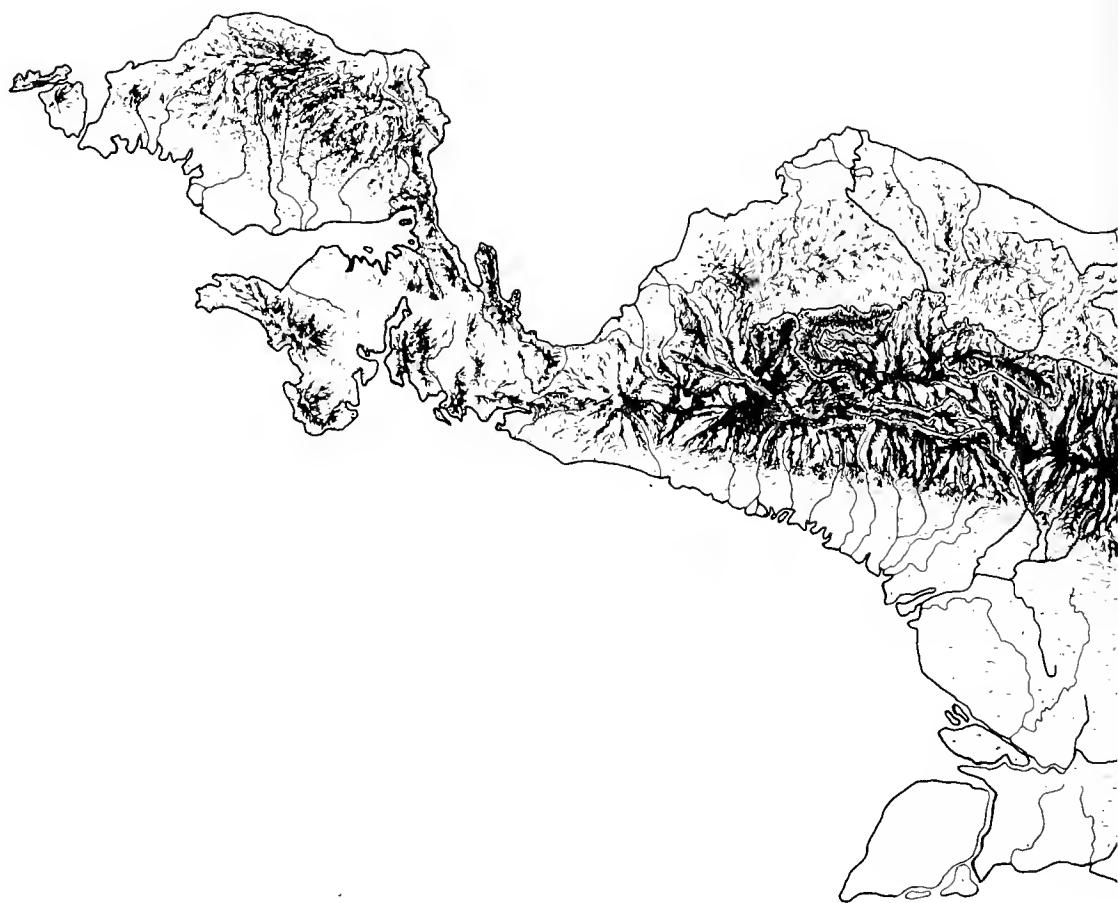
As he drew his arm from behind his back he felt ice stab through his fingers and into his shoulder, spreading and stiffening throughout his other arm, his neck. His small fingers clutched and tried to flex, but could not. He had to show her the rose, she had to see.

His joints creaked to a halt and his heart beat slower, slower. He screeched in agony as pain turned to numbness and his feet could no longer feel his weight. His mouth was dry, cold and hard. He realized he had dropped to a squatting position and dropped the rose behind his back. His life was behind him now, fading too quickly. He gasped to capture air in closing lungs. All movement ceased. The wind stirred the branches. Birds sang and all was still.

The girl still stood and watched when the truck drove up. The men lifted the stone gargoyle and lashed him to the side of the truck, safe and secure, the scream frozen on his face, frozen in his throat, frozen in his heart.

As the gears caught and the truck lurched forward a small tear fell to the dusty ground and was swallowed as it hit the earth, the life-giving earth.

The puzzled girl stared in wonder as the truck sped down the road, and the coarse laughter of the men faded away. When all was silent she turned, and under her heel in the dust of the life-giving earth a single tear glistened on the blooded rose and was gone. □



0 100 200 300 MILES

PHYSIOGRAPHIC MAP  
OF  
NEW GUINEA



# Janet Chapman Campbell

## Future

We covet or fear it before it comes;  
with hindsight we judge it  
but never know its embrace by name.

Tomorrow,  
like a slippery spirit,  
is always  
three arms away.

We siphon it  
through very thin straws  
and spit it into  
Now  
where it becomes  
a masquerade of its vague self.

It is transformed here  
leaving sands  
to be sifted or softened,  
escaping through the colanders of  
History—  
strained.

## Reunion (A Memory in Winter)

From this December stage  
your faces, like sanded crystal,  
are clouding.  
I cannot touch you now,  
Yet you warm me.

Alive within these  
cerebral walls  
of a grandmother's only womb,  
you are unchanging.  
I labor to protect you—

But I cannot kill that Herod—Time.  
You would not know  
my bacon hands,  
my single breast,  
my loss of bleeding years.

I feel you kicking  
memory's padded fence.  
But you are silent—  
so seed snug  
in this still-pulsing place.

I am pregnant  
with the hush  
of your faces, your mouth.  
I would rather die  
than miscarry.

## Undying

### The Question of Dreams

When night moves  
cloaked in her usual  
velvet opiate  
she is my exit cue:  
I step out of my  
nine pocket suit  
into a garden by Giovani  
like a tired reptile  
out of its skin  
at new seasons.  
The costumes and curtian calls  
take me from grey  
to midnight green.  
I lay curled in the warmth  
of beginnings  
(or unaware of cold  
in my benign world).

Who is the feather  
who is the breath  
in this fantastic place?  
Am I there on stage,  
masked and gradually  
exposed as morning  
forces wide the theatre sash?  
Or am I here watching  
this vaporous parade  
while my suit lay  
grey and limp,  
waiting in another land?

I visit myself  
when night moves  
cloaked in her usual  
velvet opiate.  
We are both grateful.

We are . . .

like seacraft tied  
to a bay dock,  
our naked masts  
reaching windward  
in vain and swaying  
in slow,  
motion picture movement;  
christened "Albatross"  
but the letters peel,  
sand beaten, wind tossed;  
pallid and stained  
by the cradle of shade,  
treading life,  
gurgling the tide  
and hiding brailed wings  
behind empty gullets.

We must . . .

dare to loose the  
placid places  
to taste the sun of a  
green sea-bosom;  
rock against the current;  
drown the slumber and laze  
and raise our sails beyond sandbars,  
grabbing wild gales and breezes  
with masts new-clothed  
like wings unfurled,  
rising  
with the clefts of the swells.

We will . . .

plunge, float, fly—  
no longer anchored  
as boats inland;  
hear applause  
from ocean hands upon the hull;  
scream with the gulls  
in an unknown tongue,  
undying.

**Cindy Hart**



**No Place Like Home**



16

7"

Skylar Switzer



F

**Carter E. Still**

**Winter**

. . . and when the air  
turns crisp and cold,  
and the last golden leaf  
has fallen to its resting place—  
the trees stand bold and bare. . .  
Winter descends.

**Photographs by**

**Nancy Stanford**



# Vicki Reynard

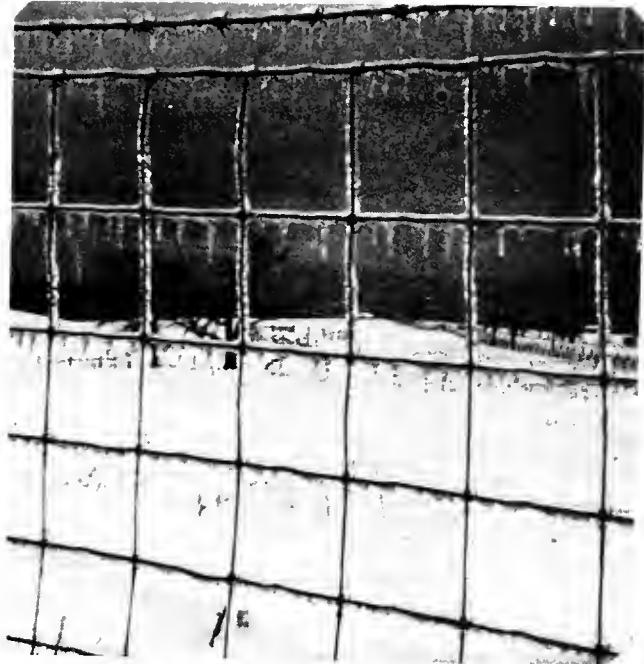
## Rachel

You haunt me,  
Though not enamored of martyrdom;  
the ragged grayness of  
skirt scuffles,  
shuddering past the dark lamplight.  
Smoky gray haunts me.

Too Good.  
You are wasted decades,  
Scored years spun around a  
dirty bobbin. Its  
thread can only exist to  
rot.  
Too good, too holy.  
With all this nothing,  
you possess my heart's  
desire.

You, dusty, smile  
beatific beneath blackness  
and across the pages of mustful  
centuries.

I, in my plastic chair,  
shift uncomfortable.  
You are so much more  
Whole.  
Faith's fate  
wove your woolens...  
but I  
in my cashmere womb  
just wait;  
clutch halfway dreams—escaping softly.



## Morning

And I alone; I drew  
my coat closer still. But the wind  
still wept upon my body.

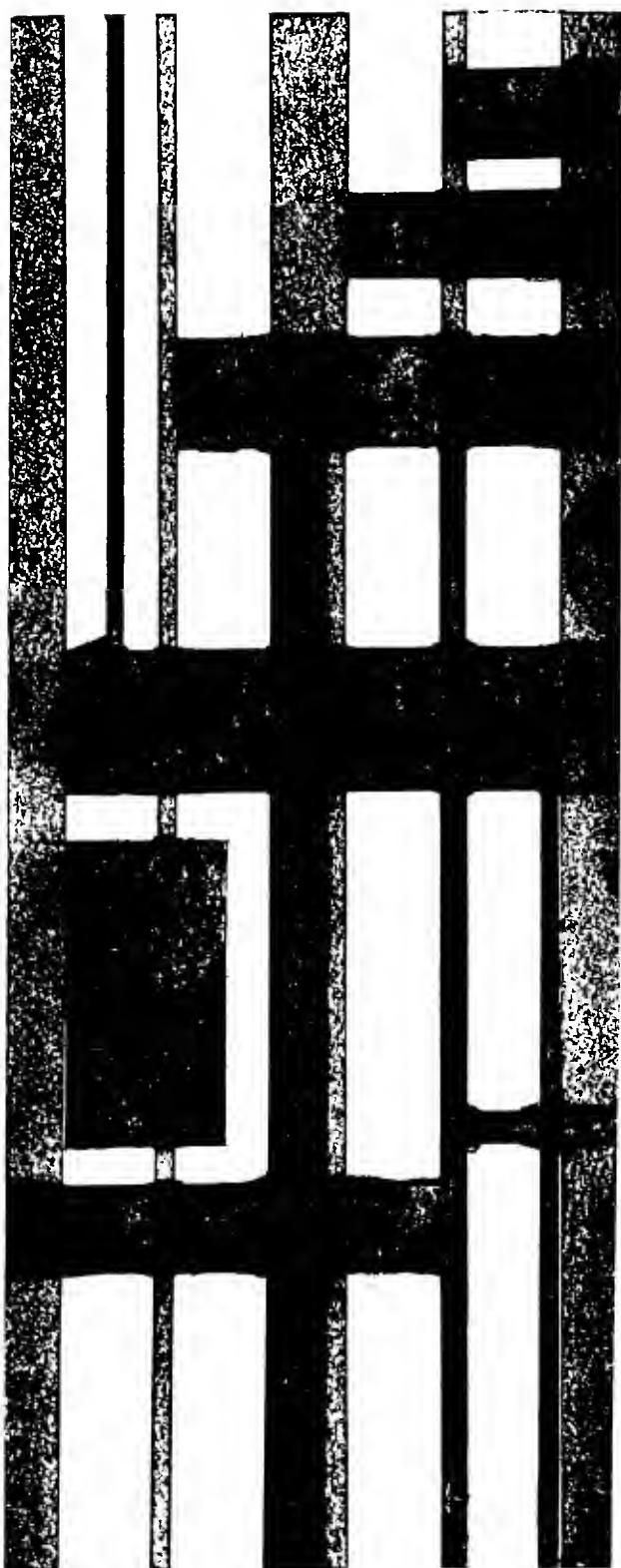
## ASHES, ASHES

Autumn leaves  
Painted corpses;  
Golden-red  
coffins.  
The wind  
Spirits them  
away to  
crash  
lightly  
to the ground  
Beautifully sense-  
less.



**Sanda Hall**





N.Y. by Night



Christmas Morn

# Kate Holzbach

## Merge

Sound drops from the shower  
Onto cool tile  
Softness skipping down the midnight hall  
In love with  
Bare feet playing ballerina  
with the floor  
Dust slide marries pitter-beat

And hearing through eyes  
That half submerged  
See  
Banners of cigarette smoke  
Amble in the midnight hall

## Greyhound Cafe

When I got to the place  
Where you pay for food  
There was a piece of glass  
Dividing the air  
With a hole for hands  
To exchange money  
And I blew a smoke ring  
That went through the hole in the glass  
And when the hand reached out  
There was a bracelet of smoke  
Around its wrist

But the hand did not notice

## **In the Night**

In the night  
Streetlights haze the cotton white  
And wander lonely down the road  
And shudder at the furry moths  
That stammer in the night

And at night  
The road walks alone  
Empty pavement glowing  
With irridoscent hush  
And the streetlights forever wander  
And all is black and white  
In the neap tide of the night



Weary

**Kathy Matt**

## Rhonda Graves



I

Tapping out a beat on the scarred oak bar;  
waiting for some attention,  
sipping frothy ice.

Footsteps sounding closer,  
reaching me,  
and passing by.

Well, hell, tonight all it takes  
is a broad shoulder.  
Comfort can be negotiated  
and I've always considered  
myself to be a fair salesman.

II

Afterwards, watching the smoke  
wind its way to the ceiling,  
seeing a tired reflection  
across the room.

It brings to mind better days.  
A younger self,  
a larger ego.

Putting out the cigarette is easier  
than putting you out of mind.

## Forbidden Fruit

Wading the crunchy path,  
Tangy titillation  
Beckons to more crisp.  
Rusty apple  
Molding on the mulch—  
Reach low for ripe.  
Brown  
And burnt (but not black).  
I eat with  
Autumn eyes.

## Brief Seclusion

While forcing a complicated world away,  
The plywood door's lock makes its promise.  
Amid a stuffed, pillowled menagerie  
Togetherness becomes gratefully surrendered.  
No invaders, no trespassers.  
Flatting melodies bounce softly around cluttered paraphernalia,  
Then spiral down tantalized ears.  
Dangling feet keep time as closed eyes rove unrealized destinies.  
Sketching extraordinary pictures for the brain's gallery.  
No invaders, no trespassers.  
The unyielding knob is impatiently pulled, rattled  
And the lock frantically forgotten.  
Beyond waits togetherness—  
Like pen and ink,  
Or arsenic and old lace,  
Or the black widow and her dead mate.

**At the Dawn**

Silent sentinels,  
we sit on steel  
and bait the teeming fishermen  
who cast their lines beneath us  
like startrails in the night.  
Their common wish for something more  
is echoed in the stones we throw  
while we anchor our hopes on what we have  
and harbor no more than that.

**Departure**

As I watched you turn to go  
I felt like sugar-water quickly trickling out  
a gutted canteen.



MAP OF MIDDLE EARTH

# NORTHERN WASTE



# MIDDLE EARTH

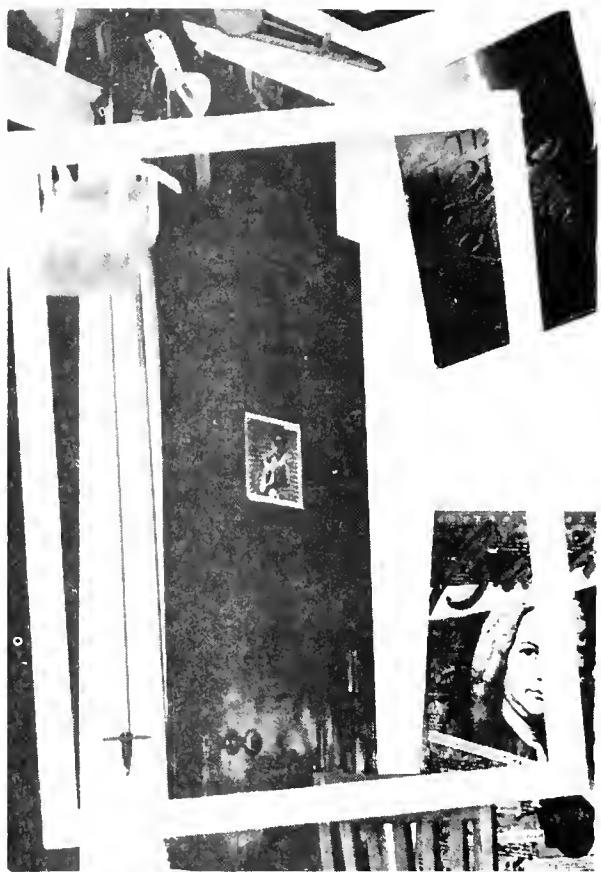


## Dale E. Williams

### LIKE ANY OTHER DAY

SOMETIME IN THE MORNING  
I WILL BE TURNED INTO A DRAGON-PRINCE  
BY THE KISS OF CONFUSION  
AND I WILL DESTROY  
AND UPBUILD  
I WILL CURSE  
AND BE DAMNED  
BUT BY MID-AFTERNOON  
I WILL FLY TO THE MOUNTAINS  
TO LOOK OUT ON THE WIDE WORLD  
AND DREAM, AND REMEMBER  
TO COME HOME IN THE EARLY EVENING  
AND SIT ON THE BACK PORCH  
TO WATCH THE NIGHT-GOD RISE

**Room 103 Westmoreland**  
**by Mark Stableford**  
**and Stephen Northcutt**  
**Photographs by**  
**Dennis Blankenship**





**Last Load**

**7-10 Split**

At a Baptist Student Union dance  
the boys and girls grouped  
as if in teams.

Two of us,  
standing a foot or so apart,  
were acting firm and opaque  
as Alice MacKenzie approached  
swift as a bowling ball.

Still a few yards away,  
her eyes met mine:  
I was certain she would strike.  
Instead,  
she framed for me  
a spare hello  
and asked my partner  
would he care to dance.

**Photograph**  
—for Leslie Wells

Your image came back to me  
bringing a thousand frames  
of lost footage  
before I realized  
my sister had passed  
through my dark  
and silent room  
wearing your perfume

# Mark Madigan

## Imagination

Close your eyes.  
When you are alone  
crossing over  
a cobblestone walk  
where rivers  
of rainwater rise  
you may say you are  
Huckleberry Finn  
searching for crayfish  
in a creek in Missouri,  
your pockets jammed  
with bright red apples.

When snow packs deeper  
beneath your feet  
as you walk along  
stepping in heavy boots  
you might say  
that the snow screams  
and that you are wearing  
the heavy black coat  
of an Auschwitz prison  
guard, who climbs a stack  
of fallen Jewish bodies.

## The Beginning of Round Two

The only clock in the room,  
a hand carved wedding gift,  
counted out time  
like a boxing referee  
as Tom and Eveline  
married exactly one year  
collapsed into each other's arms  
having fallen asleep  
while watching T.V.

## Wonderbread

When I was young  
and trying my hands at recipes,  
I'd watch as Grandmother  
peeled away the skin of apples,  
her thumb and forefinger  
guiding the edge of a sharp knife  
as bright red curls dropped to the floor.

Sometimes, I was allowed to slice  
while she would lean back  
secure in the arms of an oaken chair  
delivering me sermons,  
the recipes of her childhood.  
More than once, my hands were cut.  
But still, I'd listen  
as bright red curls dropped to the floor.

She told of early mornings  
the air scented with fresh bread  
thanks to a small mill and bakery,  
that Johnson owned, and the northwind—  
a silent delivery boy from Marshalltowne.  
Birds would wait, resting on the rim  
of a wooden fence, churchmen  
standing in line for communion.

That was before the flood.  
Before Grandmother passed away.  
Before the mill grew up, became a factory.  
Before Marshalltowne was given the county seat.  
Before the memories scattered, leaving us  
like the ruined grains of wheat  
on the floor of Johnson's mill.  
And now it's hard even to remember  
the taste of Grandmother's stories.

# Janet Chapman Campbell

## Five A. M.

At this eggshell hour  
when the Earth's a nest  
i am perched and nameless  
on a fruitful limb  
between Sunday's purple ghost  
and Monday's nectarine breath;  
at noon i never knew  
such sensual stuff!  
Rhyming gambols here  
where feet are unsandaled  
and candlelight is enough;  
where sounds flow unmeasured.

But i know it won't be long  
until this morning,  
like apology,  
cracks a timid grin  
and hours hatch  
not to turn about—  
and then the giant sounds climb out.

## The Hat

Her head dips  
Apologetically, as though  
The hat should  
Not be there.  
Her shy glance  
Seeks the mirror,  
Then steadies  
In a stare  
At her image.

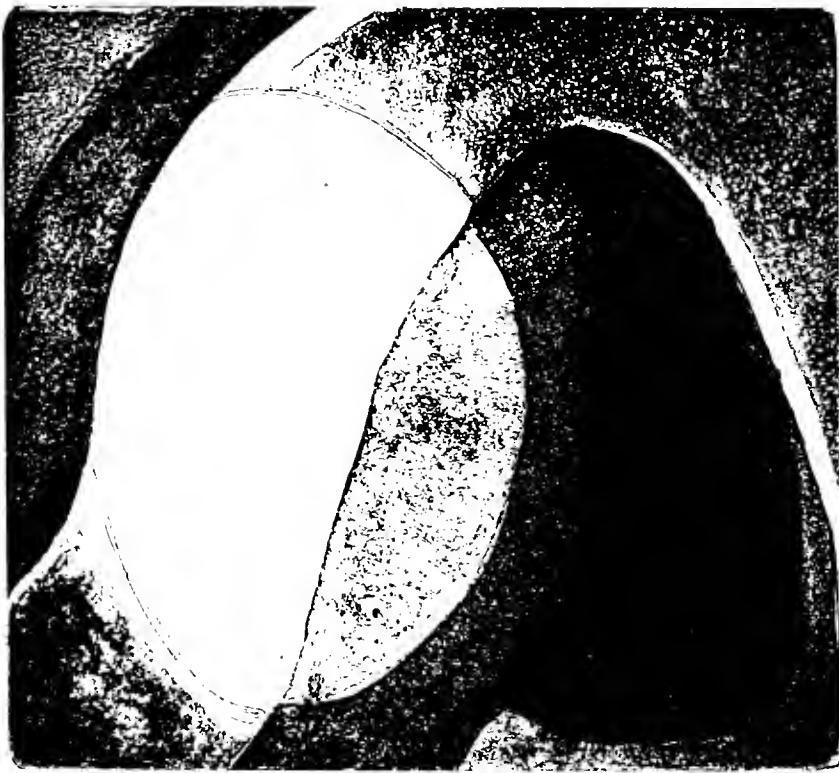
The gray hat  
Majestically, sweeps  
Back softening  
The lines of care.  
She smiles  
And the moment  
Trumpets, as frivolity  
Lives a dare.

## Kim McCall

### Instant Replay Part Two

They told me the first shattering of  
myself would be hell,  
Yet like an epidermis would selfishly  
close against future distress—  
Not so.  
It appears the more replicas of you I  
lose only make my disconcerted “Why?” louder.  
This new you and his protege follow the  
script the three of us wrote,  
Only in different settings.  
Perhaps I’m the one denominator  
common to both productions.  
That’s always so.  
The advantage is obvious:  
At least I don’t have to memorize  
my lines. . . .

# Sylvie Rupple





# C. France

## Canephorae

i purchased a body in the market just last noon  
a pine envelope smattered w/wrinkles & grain.  
he stood by my side and generally could be  
found under  
my armpit,  
a crutch to but  
tress  
a gothic cath  
edral.

the shrew to be blamed for usurping affection  
and  
i had not yet seen

boticelli's original  
on the 1/2 shell & a  
sixpack in  
the back  
seat.

i dared to take him home to the forest, to view  
a living that he could not know. petrified, he  
fled from the prospect of becoming this chair  
or  
that table

the kindling was frosted last evening, despite  
the fact that it

huddled together  
to keep a  
daylight  
warmth

it's st. martin's summer and things are fooled into  
death.

fresh milk takes time to sour  
cherish this he said  
rosebay courts the indra breeze but  
truth's aroma mingles w/the god  
truth is the body  
a fragile jar  
the florist's hothouse  
beneath whose glass the fragrance  
imprisoned  
a divinely fine scentless blossom  
the end impending and the jar  
steam and condensation  
steam and condensation  
contemplation  
steams the glass walls only to be  
rubbed away from the inside  
drips and beads perspiring  
to be wiped from beneath  
the body is the foam  
of a wave thrashing  
on the rocks  
the cliffs jagging  
the unprotrudable.

### **The Water Dog**

i am a traveler lost at sea  
at peace w/the foam on the crest  
of one wave.  
the gulls surround the swells in a whirling cyclone of  
feathers and screech  
waiting for that morcel  
of saline flesh soon  
they'll peck upon themselves. . .  
their bitter air meat gags their penchant for the  
sweetness imbibed in a salted  
meal.  
i am a traveler lost at sea  
and i cannot eat fish like the  
others do.  
my teeth fall out much as the scales of a blue thrashing  
on a teak deck, gasping  
to kiss the water for  
one continuous moment.  
i am a traveler lost at sea  
and the sapphire depths stain  
the ripples and reflections as  
parched eyes stare back at me  
yielding only to a horizontal  
shore.  
i have a feeling of seeing him fleetingly in bottles  
and  
glass panes.

## C. France

yl know when yv met yr arrow in the night  
(hesitating)  
on the edge of the forest, he  
surges through the hibernator's  
vein like a vine  
(twisting)  
deep w/in that foliage  
a vine that swings like the monkey  
juggling from tree to tree  
never to encounter the ripened fruit

i sed

yl know when yv met yr arrow in the night  
when yu discover the thorns  
s c a t t e r e d  
at yr feet baring  
yr stem  
to invasion and yr rouge  
to oblivion

i sed

the softest fetters are the fiercest  
to snap

w/ one parting warning (as yu cover  
yr wound yr stigmata) to the arrow

yl know  
i sed

the blade of grass held improperly  
will slash yr flesh.

Kathy Matt



# J. Patrick Thompson

## Silent Vigil

Midnight, the thunder speaks  
While curtains that stir  
Against the stricken wind  
Stir the sleeping awake

Awake, when against the wind  
Lightening crowns the morning mist  
And stricken dumb  
The trembling of the cities below.

Whose eyes are humbled by those fingers  
That paint bright the dark  
Alone the briary rose  
And toss on the earth water and blood

Aglow, the midnight of once darkness  
The midnight once past reproach  
Cast a lamp against dark vigilers  
Who give ear to thunder speech.

All are silent,  
Seeing where the lightning leaps  
They turn to each other's touch  
Knowing there's touch to turn to  
And rest awhile their fears  
Sensing . . .  
that man nor woman are ever alone.

## Dancer

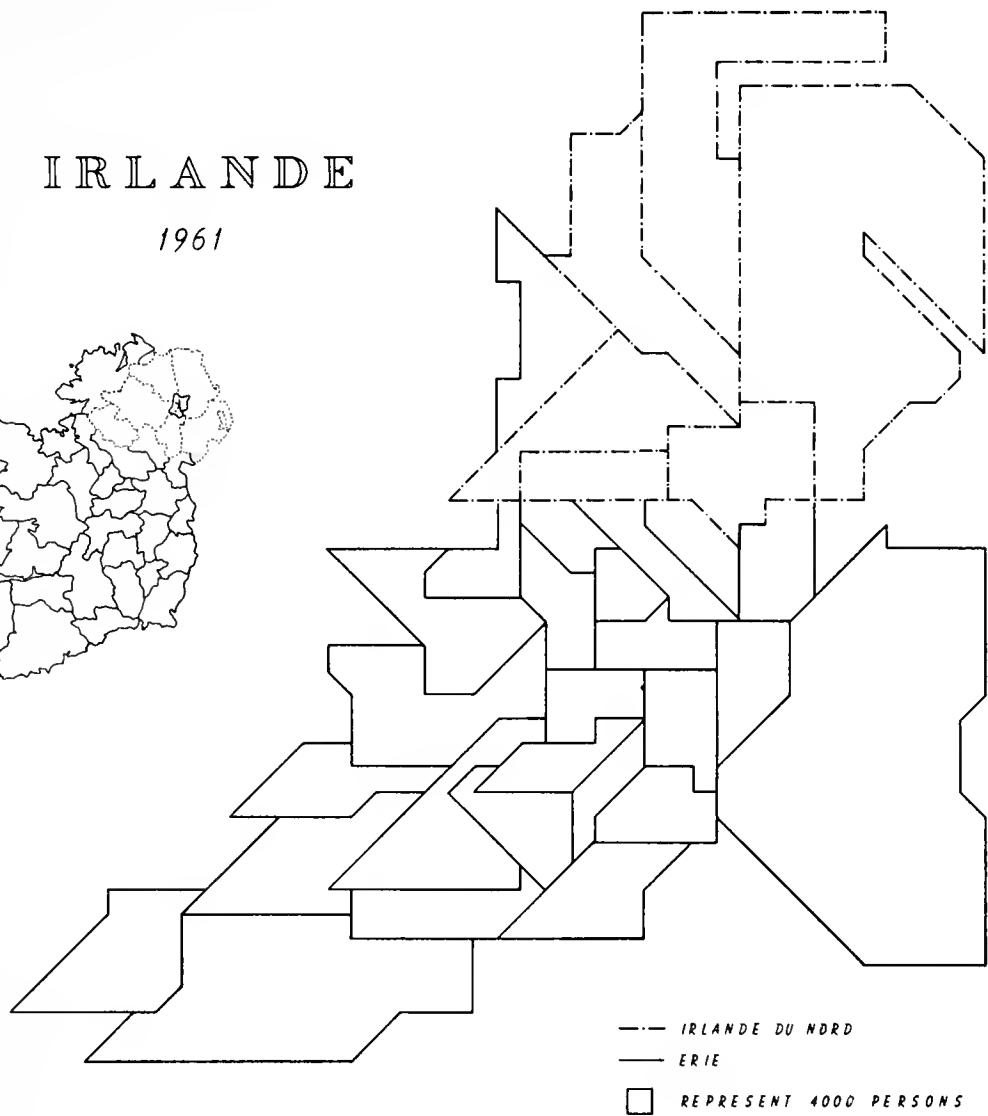
A glistening ornament  
time watches—standing in a corner  
silence listens for movement  
ignored by its very adorer  
minutes slumber in their sheaths  
awaiting a deluge of emotions—

thunderclap implants its teeth,  
hands sip the potion  
strangers with familiarity  
alike with strangeness  
confined to a circular ditty.  
revolving nevertheless.

Swerving flesh with stone face  
stone wall with measured pace  
distance melts, competing into submission  
the ticking of breath its decomposition.

IRLANDE

1961



# F. A. Straley

## I See Him There

As I see him there  
there in that meager box  
of lead and brass and cherry wood  
I remember

Saturday afternoons and  
Atlanta Braves Baseball  
Henry Aarron hotdogs and peanuts  
the sunshine smiling through his eyes  
and the popcorn in his teeth  
I remember

Grandma alone now  
how his world moved for her  
her smile his smile  
was a wet puppy wagtail  
at the pantry door and  
he would laugh long and loud  
with a wonderful tone of love  
I remember

Stories of his son my father  
tennis matches the Bluegrass Trophy  
and learning to drink stories  
of his father the Captain  
hillbilly courtrooms to Capitol Hill  
and Southern's stage trunk  
I remember

A white Atlanta Christmas  
and the tree he let me chop down  
the cold warmth of his breath  
as we hauled it to his  
great white Atlanta home

I remember  
And I see him there. . .

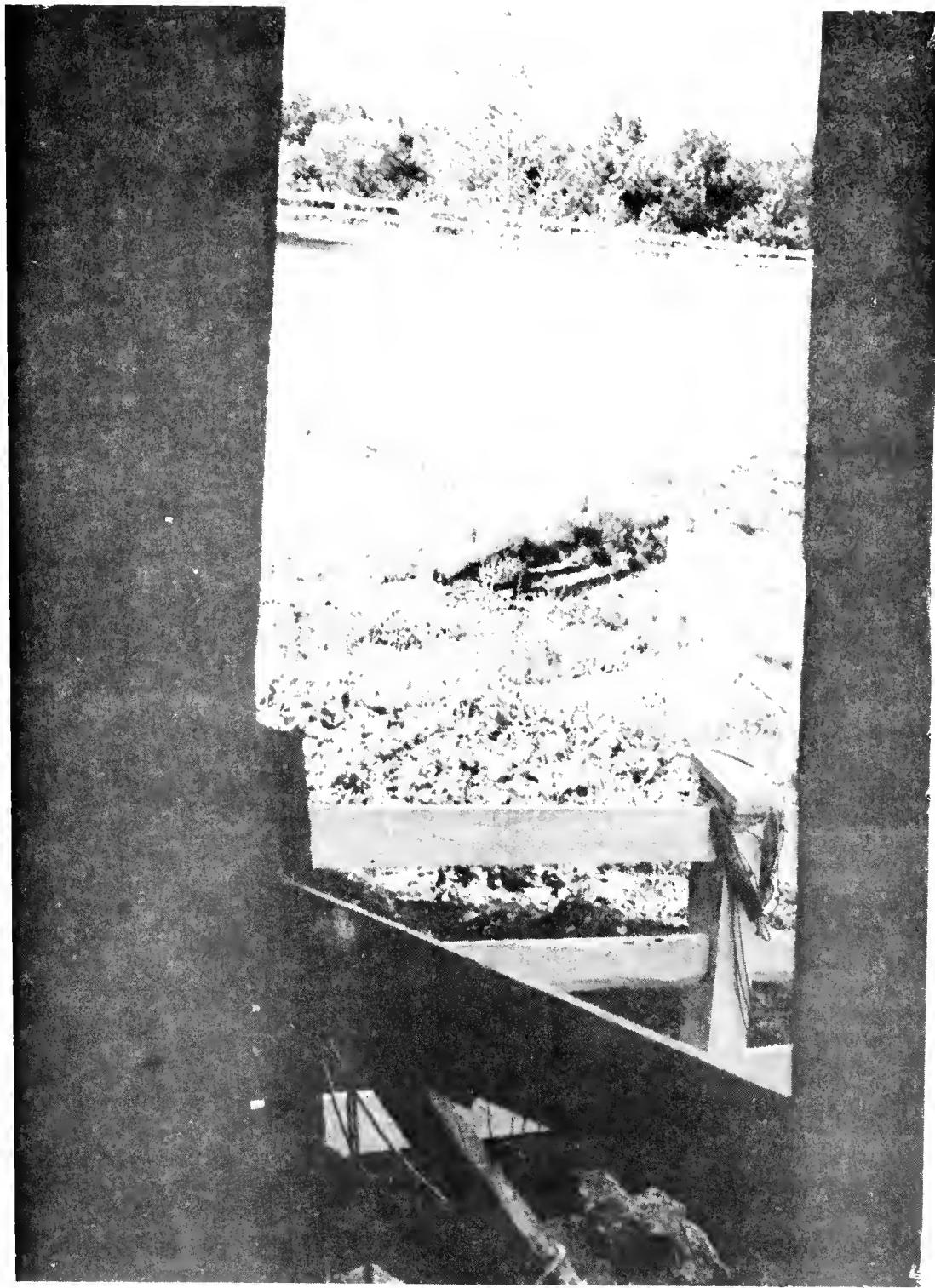
## **When I Die**

When I die  
I'll move to Atlanta  
Float down the mud brown  
Chattachuchee sipping Southern  
Comfort and ice cold coca-cola;  
Shelling salty dry roasted Georgia nuts;  
And rippling through the fragrance of  
Dogwoods barking on the shore  
When I die  
I'll pray for pecans, and peachtrees  
Blackeyed peas and Southern Fried Chicken (Maddox Style)  
I'll follow the blue winter moon to Atlanta  
and bury my soul in the Underground

## **The Crab**

Wrapped in the moonlight;  
a soft, pale shroud, floating  
on the cool September sand.  
Weaving a somber patchwork;  
lost, like a priest, in silent revery.  
Moving to the water's edge  
he stops, halts his meditation,  
and listens to the melancholy  
whisper rolling on the waves.  
Watery fingers glide toward him;  
he watches as they stop, then  
slowly ebb and slide away.  
Turning from that timeless murmur,  
he sinks into the quiet night;  
and the rolling whisper softly fades.

## Kathy Matt





In lieu of inclination  
your surrogate intentions  
mingled like a leopard  
pacing the fence.  
But I was the caught thing,  
invited by your trickery.  
Facing you even in your compound,  
I was unadorned.  
I wanted you to touch me  
if you would not yearn me  
so I baited you knowing the peril.  
Impatient, your reflexes were keen.

## Garnishes

And they took us to the country in autumns  
to get apples and wood  
(for the zealous fires that Daddy  
would conduct for us  
as Mother would sit  
feet tucked beneath her,  
pulling me over,  
breathing urgently on me.)  
and then to visit MaMaa's  
to eat ham on her stained plates,  
and sitting in the parlour,  
we were as restless and unmanageable  
as the slipcovers on the chairs.  
But the trip home  
Mother and we and car's arid  
sang like weeds wild on the steplake  
and wrote on our breath on windows  
while Daddy marked deer negotiating the field,  
eyes like judges.  
Arriving home to bed, Mother would see  
that we were as warmly inserted in bed  
as mints in a priest's cheek  
and in the morning make us into acrobats  
on her raised goose legs,  
and even if we were not cold  
she would wrap herself around us.  
She wrapped our insides  
like wallpaper cohering  
and garnishing a room.

## **Update**

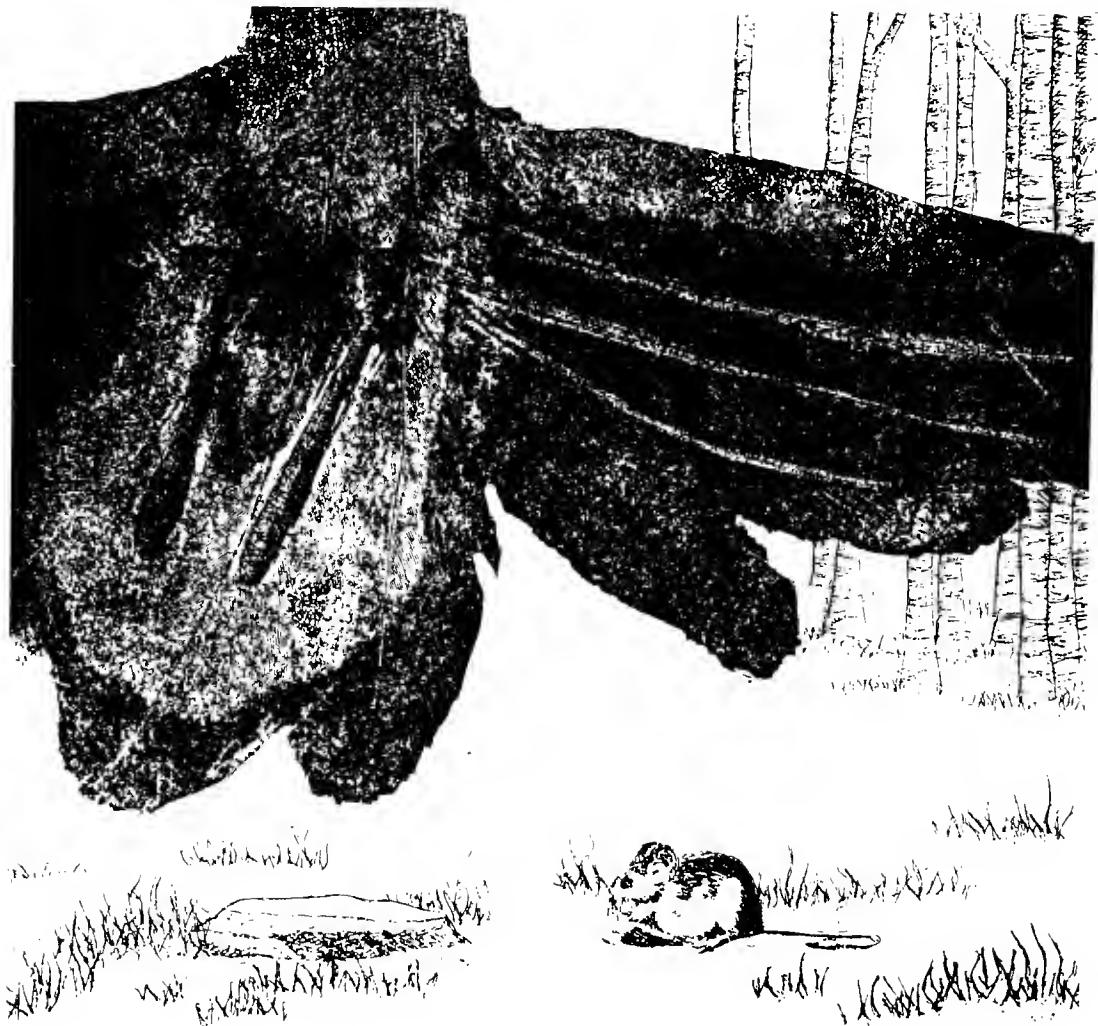
Men still condescend to us.  
Do not oscillate or yield.  
We are all yet trollops of ill-repute.  
We whine with our paper throats  
but pawn our sobriety for a life  
as only plush caulk.  
We pander men's self to self  
so we can think of ourselves with awe.  
Quit the wretched austerity;  
Feel your pangs.  
Be a peril, a nuisance,  
an effacement, and always a covetess.  
Be liable for your own worth.  
Choke on condescension.

Ogress, dine for once in your life  
and be wholesome.

## **Lost Baby**

She wanted to treat it all  
like a sock that sheds off with a turn in bed  
and is lost in the swathes of the blankets.

But every pounding day  
the elementary school let out,  
and one child in particular  
who passed by  
would hasten to the corner  
and opening her lunch pail,  
she would offer her milk  
to a God-forsaken yellow cat  
emerging head-first  
from the sewer.



**Survival**



Kerry Kiehl



Kerry  
Kiehl

absent minded phone calls  
random recollections a post card never signed  
drinking out of your cup your bottle in my closet  
words unspoken reel again and again in my mind  
what is said here and there fall  
like traces in the sand I read them for clues

a spark in the darkness I love the unutterableness  
I lose myself in it

a priestess at your temple  
sacrificing time and wishes at your obscurities  
I sleep on the temple steps awaiting the call  
sunrise your eyes will draw me in

### **Elegy for John B.**

vain and verbose  
I saw you tucking in your shirttail smiling, hiding  
half burned cigarettes, liquor bottles  
a vintage year  
a purge an affirmation of the leaden soul  
distilled into ashes light & cold  
night and days of burning burning  
your eyes your cigarette  
burning sheets  
reach for her soft hands  
receding  
you left them bleeding  
needing too much too late, you said  
you'd rather be dead

## Nancy Rudd

we rode through town in your old white ghost car  
as long as one of those old city blocks  
    tearstains on the tattered walls streaks of pain on  
    chipped crusted tiles  
This city is dying I thought  
as we slid through garbage filled streets wind blown  
I could smell death  
I looked at you and you were dead too

You say I live in the city of dreams  
never looking down  
You live in the ruins they all should've left long ago  
the decay spreads like my memories piece by piece  
the rain washes away the color of the pain until  
faded pale a sunbaked old sign on a rotting stump

I'm a dreamer, yes, that's true . . . but you were too  
but the dream died . . . or did you kill it in its sleep?

## Joanne Gray





**Skylar Switzer**



**Untitled**

exhaustion  
sunk into the soft, coil-stained cloth  
where depressions were waiting,  
though the infection still escaped  
through the pale, early light  
clutching a memory  
the blue strained to meet the brown counterpart—  
and what were you thinking?

wavelengths tense  
to join the blush  
and bodies,  
if only . . .  
the scent was so implanted  
together with the contact,  
while a smile implants itself—  
if only, what?

then laughter cracked the still air, hovering,  
ephemeral the succession of seconds.  
and brown lingered  
as ink  
smeared across the paper  
no blade to scrape away the ashes  
so the blue wandered,  
visions buried in depths unshared.

insidiousness all?  
selfish passion plays with ease  
in attaining such hours of rampant images.  
the room, now fully absorbing the light,  
exposed no fox.

finally  
hands tightly enveloped other hands  
then drew away,  
caused a fragile thread  
of recall to remain  
like a streak of white, gold light  
in the clear blackness  
momentarily connecting  
two unknown points.

# Sarah Sasser

## Twice

evening slid into her  
in the form of a bad dream  
and waking, she had not slept.  
thoughts pouring through like alcohol  
into a huge, empty vat,  
echoes bounce the brain from splashes  
resounding on the wood—  
it makes sense for nothing,  
nothing!

the senses were as bitter as this liquid.  
hot, with boilding blackness  
surrounded by creamy ceramic,  
“still drinkin’ that coffee?”  
and coming home to see the homeless gather  
for the warmth of talking bodies  
or just bodies everywhere.

and then he wrote—  
the words skated on the smoothest December ice  
with sparks nestled in carved, gelid tracks  
bouncing off powder into the air softly.

I’m looking for a Thursday nite special with a little lovin’  
in my red-and-white checkered shirt and faded blue ozzie sweater,  
jus’ call me pompadour  
and I’ll comb you slick.

kisses like touching lips  
against the cheap tinfoil  
on the bottle’s green throat  
left a sharp caress. . .

she thought he was calling  
while the phone answered to another,  
on the line to one greasy, lonely soul  
and cigarettes disintegrated,  
filtered through the cracks  
of open, stuffy air.  
the red cord hangs limp . . .  
don’t want to talk to you,  
or you  
or you  
or you.

it was all that was ever desired,  
not enough to last a lifetime  
just fill the crevice.  
you were my elixir  
now you are off, so off.

she had finished—awoken—  
and needed to get on,  
get on with giving more beer  
and less time to taste the motions  
of acrid aluminum,  
hear the voices screaming  
pierce the pain.

**Skylar Switzer**



## Kathy Matt





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